



SUMMER TIMES

A Newsletter for SFSP Sponsors in Indiana

This email is to provide sponsors with updated and helpful information on the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in the State of Indiana. We have important news and reminders to help you make your summer as successful as possible!

March 2019



As the month of February has exited, there is a renewed hope that the winter with its weather woes is leaving right behind it! The State Agency preparations for the summer feeding are in full swing and we hope our sponsors' summer plans are as well! Since *Summer Times* continues to be one of the main ways our office relays up-to-date program information to our sponsors, it is imperative that each organization is not only aware but also follows the directives and guidance shared in this communication.

Sponsor Meetings & New Resources

The State Agency has just concluded our annual Sponsor Summit in Indianapolis and two regional SFSP Roundtable discussions in Hobart and Fort Wayne. These special gatherings of our largest SFSP sponsors gave us an opportunity to not just share important program updates but to receive some valuable feedback as well. One specific need that was brought up by sponsors on several occasions, is a need for more advertising and promotional materials, including both printed and digital resources that can be used via social media and other local outreach channels to promote the availability of the summer meals. Look for more exciting updates in weeks to come as we are in the process of finalizing a productions of several freshly designed resources including:

- **SFSP yard signs** in the bright colors of the State of Indiana



- **A selection of SFSP Instructional Posters** – will help to ensure daily compliance at the sites. Both, weather resistant printed versions and digital copies of these informational flyers will be available soon



- **Color-coordinated, informational SFSP blog samples and web banners** – to help promote summer meals via web and various social media outlets
- **Summer Meals Food Safety kits** - produced by the Institute of Child Nutrition – especially useful for our new sponsors and first time sites

Look for more updates concerning product availability and delivery in the coming weeks.

CNPweb is Open for SFSP Annual Application Process

After some unanticipated delays, our office is glad to report the CNPweb SFSP puzzle piece is open for 2019 season! Sponsors will notice a few modifications in the information that is requested on both Sponsor and Site application sheet, most of which stemmed from recently rescinded SFSP policies and Indiana SFSP Management Evaluation conducted last fall. The biggest visible change is the elimination of *Closed Enrolled Site* option using school or US Census eligibility. Moving forward, all Closed Enrolled sites must establish their SFSP eligibility by using individual eligibility information and at least half of the enrolled participants must be documented as low-income in order to claim all meals served for reimbursement. All the system and policy changes will be discussed in depth during our annual sponsor trainings this spring.



Sponsor Trainings Available this Spring

It is not too late to register for one of the SFSP trainings in your area. This will be a great opportunity to brush up on your SFSP administrative skills and hear more about the SFSP rescinded policies. Space is limited. For a quick overview of policy waivers the State of Indiana has requested, check out the following:

The good news is that Indiana *Waiver Request for Meal Service Requirements* has just received an approval from the USDA National Office! Meanwhile, the *Waiver Request for Extension of Offer versus Serve* is still pending USDA's approval. We do remain cautiously optimistic that this request will be granted for as well. The waivers remain in effect for only one year at a time as the State Agency must report on the use and benefits of these waivers annually.

Farm to Summer

A recent nationwide data collection demonstrated that less than a quarter of Indiana school sponsors are currently using local foods in preparation of their summer meals. Compared to some of our neighboring states, Indiana has a lot of catching up to do and thankfully, there is no lack of Hoosier farmers! We strongly encourage all of our sponsors to plan, purchase and prepare meals that incorporate locally grown products into their SFSP menus. Start making plans to integrate more local foods into your 2019 SFSP today and look for our special *Indiana Farm to Summer* week information in our next newsletter.



Take Advantage of Local Food Safety Training Opportunities

The subject of food safety will never be far removed from the minds of SFSP operators. This topic is especially timely now since the season of annual sponsor staff trainings is fast approaching. With that in mind, remember that all food service locations that plan to serve and claim SFSP meals for reimbursement, must be included on your spring correspondence to your local health department prior to the sites being approved in the CNPweb. Also, as in the past, a copy of the health department notification, either via letter or email, must be submitted to our office. All locations that will be operating as SFSP meal service sites, must be included in that correspondence.



In addition, many local health departments offer regularly free food safety trainings. The next such opportunity for Marion County Sponsors is on April 2, 2019. You can register here: <http://marionhealth.org/programs/environmental-health/food-and-consumer-safety-2/> To learn more about free food safety trainings across the state and locate the contact information of your local Health Officer, use this link: <https://secure.in.gov/isdh/24822.htm>

USDA Foods aka Summer Commodities

As in the past, all returning self-preparing sponsors and school food authorities that have a FSMC running their food service operations, will be contacted concerning the availability of USDA Foods. In March, look for a special email from our Commodities Specialist, Cheryl Moore, cmoore@doe.in.gov about the availability these free foods for SFSP use. Eligible sponsors interested in this must complete the digital request form included in Cheryl's email. These non-refrigerated boxed food items typically consist of basic canned goods such as green beans, corn, peaches or apple sauce. While this will help with food inventory, sponsors must still purchase food commercially to prepare meals that meet the minimum meal pattern requirements established by the USDA.



Your Chance to Apply for Turnip the Beet Award will be back in 2019!

Although 2018 Turnip the Beet winners are yet to be announced, it is a good time to mark your calendar and remember to apply for the award in 2019! The application for this special nutrition excellence accolade becomes available for sponsor nominations in August/September 2019. However, this is a time when most schools are very busy with the start of the new school year. Thus, it is important that sponsors start taking first steps now to be fully prepared later. A good place to begin is by reviewing the last year's SFSP menu, educating yourself about what's available locally and discussing with your vendors the need to purchase more local products.



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